39: Bernatzik--460 E-5 (1936-1937) 1947 AO1 Thailand

[p 459 is blank]

AKha A04
Miao AE5

/339/

Chapter 17

Means of Subsistence

a) Gathering

M 222 M [731] A 222 [262] [731] After the harvest the Meau regularly gather wild roots, tubers, and fruits. Beyond this time gathering is done only occasionally, for instance, on hunting expeditions or during migrations. In times of crop failures, however, gathering plays an important role and may even become a necessity for survival. Among the Akha in Thailand, who live under absolutely the same climatic conditions and whose diet, in accordance with their generally greater primitiveness, is less varied than that of the Meau, gathering plays at least an equally important role in times of famine. In years of abundance, on the other hand, it is likewise practiced regularly only after the harvest, but otherwise only occasionally.

b) Hunting

M 224 A [224] M [151] [184] Hunting is of much greater significance than gathering among the Meau and among the Akha. The Meau are excellent observers, have presence of mind, and are animated by a burning passion for the hunt. Since, in addition, they are excellent marksmen and have great patience and endurance, they have all the qualifications for good hunters.

With regard to the Meau in Indochina, who, of course, are in a far better position economically than the mountain peoples on the poor soil in northern Thailand, hunting seems to be less important. Lajonquière (1) writes, for instance:

1. II, p. 311.

M [411] [17] [389] "Hunting is not practiced as a regular means of subsistence but they are nevertheless skilled hunters. They use a gun similar to the one of the 'Man,' which, /340/ like the powder, they make themselves."